Compton Mackenzie, author of "Sylvia & Michael."

For Service Readers

WE are in favor of making it a State's prison offence to forget the name of the person who writes a book and remember the name of the book. A few weeks in the county jail would be a good penalty for forgetting the name of an editor or compiler. As it is, the law does not touch a man for any of these crimes and the authors, editors and compilers are at the mercy of an ungrateful and unremembering public.

In speaking of *Off Duty*, which is a book of popular appeal, it is well to state, therefore, that its compiler is Wilhelmina Harper before it is announced as a collection of master short stories selected with an eye to pleasing men in the service. Miss Harper has been in charge of a library for enlisted men at one of the training camps during the war and has made a close study of the needs of our soldiers and sailors. It is agreeably surprising to find William Dean Howells and Oscar Wilde included in a book meant for doughboys, and establishes the fact that Miss Harper has not the common idea that *Casey at the Bat and Dere Mamle* are not the limit of their literary capacity. Her idea is that many of the doughboys have had their heads bent so low literally as to prevent acquaintance with the higher form of writing, but that once having seized upon this book in leisure moments and found it good, they will never resume the old enthusiasms.

Besides Howells and Wilde ten other short story writers, including Hamlin Garland, Bret Harte, Edna Ferber, O. Henry, Rex Beach and Irving Bacheller, are represented by a story apiece. The book is primarily a man's book, and will by the same token be especially pleasing to women. Yeowomen will like it quite as well as soldiers and sailors, and there is no reason for its being confined to people in uniform. We recommend it for all libraries, in and out of the service.

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Pasteur Redivivus:

By REGIS MICHAUD.

HOW would Pasteur feel seeing himself on the scene of the Paris Vaudeville, called back to life by the most Parisian of the Parisians, Sacha Guitry? Up to now, since the days of Shakespeare or of Corneille, great men had appeared in a play only with a sword in their hands, as Nietzschean figures, and not as intellectuals escaped from R. W. Emerson's gallery of representative men. This is one of the original sides of the play, and there are many others.

Dramatic critics have already insisted on the singularity of a play, and especially a French play, without even a woman in it and with hardly the shadow of a love story. There is, it is true, a scene where one of Pasteur's disciples comes to his master for advice on an "affaire de cœur." Pasteur, however, seems very little inclined to waste his time in unravelling love problems, and sends the lover back to more proficient work. But why should women have the monopoly of love on the stage? Is there not anything in the dictionary, and in every man's heart, as "philanthropy," the love of humanity at large, so dear to the French through their national history?

If the drama is above all a conflict of men among themselves or against destiny, since the days of Æschylus, dramatic elements are not lacking in Sacha Guitry's *Pasteur*. We first have the battle of the scientist with the unknown, the thrilling *x* of the problem, to decide between "spontaneous generation" and the newly discovered ferments. In his play Guitry has succeeded in dramatizing even science, as Balzac already tried to do when he wrote *The Search After the Absolute*.

II.

Then there is the personal fight of great but misunderstood Pasteur against academic routine. The second act in the Academy of Medicine is original, not only for the idea of placing Pasteur's opponents in the very midst of the audience and for making a dramatic event of a scientific caucus. The commanding figure and undaunted personality of Pasteur is there brought forward with complete mastery by Guitry. Enthusiasm for science has developed the fighting spirit in Pasteur to the point of almost fighting a duel with one of his colleagues. Fortunately a bit of genuine humor suddenly clears the tragic atmosphere. An old fashioned doctor, worthy of Molière, seeks "reparation par les armes," because Pasteur has justly and publicly denounced him. The naive and realistic Pasteur refuses to waste, for such a trifle, his time and especially his blood, so necessary to the welfare of his fellow mortals. Brave as any hero of Corneille, the sword is not the tool Pasteur uses to win his victories. Here is his answer to his rival:

PASTEUR: Is it my fault if M. Guerin (the offended doctor) is as old as he is? Why does he attack me? Did I pay any attention to him? Certainly not." To the doctors who have come to arrange the duel: "Here, gentlemen, here we are! This is the result of your methods! I propose to them to cure their fellow mortals and they offer me—what? . . . a duel! After all, that turns out to be just a little drole. . . . I think you will succeed in making me laugh, and this is none too easy. . . . But, really, do you see me, Pasteur, fighting that old man? This is a strange way of understanding science. . . . Have no illusions; there will be no duel. . . . It is too little like my own method of fighting. . . ."

Through the whole second act of Guitry's play, with his humor, his bitter sarcasms, his unflinching arraignment and hatred of human stupidity, Pasteur shows himself a true kinsman of Molière's Alceste in *The Misanthrope*.

III.

In act third Guitry has found new sources of pathos in the scruples of Pasteur when the moment comes for him to put to test for the first time his theories. They have just brought to him a little Alsatian boy, Joseph Meister, bitten by a dog. This time the undaunted faith of Pasteur in science and in himself is brought to a severe trial. Is he going to risk his fame for the life of a nine-year-old child? Is it life or death which is to be injected? This is certainly the crucial hour and the climax of the play. The scene where the three scientists debate among themselves that question of life or death is one of the most thrilling.

In act fourth Pasteur has won his case. He is now famous through the world, but the drama is not over. We now see the great humanitarian desperate and helpless before death, as the hero of Balzac's *Peau de chagrin* before the shrunken bit of shagreen which measures the length of his life. Pasteur is on the track of a new discovery for the cure of epilepsy. He needs only six months to bring his experiments to a conclusion. Can his friend the doctor promise as much? The naive joy of Pasteur when the doctor promises, and his secret intention to cheat the doctor for more work are delightful:

PASTEUR: "Think twice, doctor. I don't want you, for the sake of friendship, to make me waste my time, already measured out to me. . . . Be very careful! . . . If it is only for me a question of days, I go back to Paris to-night and lock myself in my laboratory, never to leave it. But if it is a question of months, of course I could, may be, afford to rest a few weeks. . . . You understand, don't you?"

But the case is not so bad as that, affirms the physician; it is still for Pasteur a question of years:

PASTEUR: "Of years! . . . But then, my friend, I have plenty of time! . . . You scared me, you know . . . and *I was afraid for epilepsy!* Years! . . . but that is longer than I want to live! Think of that . . . *I need only six months . . . and after that, if I have some more months to live . . . well, I will not know what to do with them.*"

Those "mots," half comic, half tragic, of great Pasteur in this scene are certainly in the best tradition of the French stage since Molière.

Thus, from the mere human and psychological point of view, Guitry's *Pasteur* is a very complete and human play. But there is more than that, and the present circumstances in France give to it a real historical interest. A French critic has just written that the Ministry of Public Instruction ought to give free productions of the play to all the schools of France. Certainly, no more timely and appropriate lesson could be offered to France, in these days, than that of the life of Pasteur. France has been more inclined, so far, to put her vices rather than her virtues on the stage, because, unfortunately, we are much less comical or tragic by our virtues than by our defects. Old Aristotle knew it when he made the rule for the tragic hero to be neither entirely bad nor entirely good. And this is probably why Sacha Guitry himself has given a few foibles to Pasteur.

But the time seems to have come for a change. Though victorious this time France, in many regards, is looking gravely ahead to the future as she did in 1870. There are ruins to repair; there is the vitality of the nation to protect; above all there is the danger of dilettantism to avoid. No problem, among others, has done so much, in the past, to paralyze the free play of French energies as the conflict between religion and the spirit of science, between idealism and the gospel of determinism as preached in the days of Renan, Taine or Berthelot until Henri Bergson after Henri Poincare came to reopen the door to spiritualism.

Here comes Pasteur on the French stage to reconcile science and faith, to declare that "he holds all the cynics in horror" and that "those who doubt are odious to him"—himself a Christian and a scientist, both in the same man.

IV.

Then Pasteur, in Guitry's play, preaches the gospel of work and fervent labor to which France will not fail to listen for her material and spiritual reconstruction. "By continuous labor every one of us must prepare the future," says Pasteur. What is, after all, the moral lesson of *Pasteur*, if not the pathetic example of a man who does not find enough life, not to enjoy it as an epicure or a dilettante, but to devote it entirely to the welfare of his fellow men?

And there is the question of patriotism. If France were again, by any chance, inclined to assume the "let-us-bless-and-kiss-everybody" attitude, she would better remember Pasteur's saying, after 1870, that "if science knows of no country, the scientist himself is in possession of one." Maurice Donnay some time ago wrote a parallel between Pasteur, the great humanitarian, and the German ex-Kaiser, between him who kills and him who saves.

PASTEUR. By SACHA GUITRY. Paris: Published by *L'Illustration Theatrale*.

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